

Village of Empire

Tree Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday April 12, 2022 @ 1:00 pm

Members Present: Bacon, Dye, Smith

Call to order at 1:00 pm

1. Questions from the Davey Tree Group. Lee Mueller contacted Bacon with questions to help him complete his draft of the Urban Forest Program for the Village. Below are the questions and the answers discussed. These were sent to the Mueller immediately following the meeting.

How much money does Empire spend in the management and maintenance of trees each year (e.g. planting, pruning, removal, storm cleanup, etc.)? This should include both contractual and in-house work. Approximate numbers, or a range of figures is totally acceptable. **We are estimating between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per year. Last year, we hired a contractor to remove a number of trees and the cost was just under \$5,000. We have in our CIP \$2,000 for tree maintenance. That said, we are assuming that another \$1,000 to \$2,000 may be spent on trees each year in staff time.**

How many trees does Empire plant each year? If any. **This presented us with an interesting question. A few years back, we were planting 10 - 15 trees every two years using either Consumer's Energy or DTE grants (the problem became one of ongoing maintenance of new trees and limited staff time). Some survived and some did not. This year, we are planning a community planting with ReLeaf with 20 trees. Originally, we had hoped to use the ReLeaf funding to add shade trees to our planned walkway at Shalda Park. But, as with any project of that size, we are probably about a year away from being able to do planting. But, we have lots of planting sites that were identified in the inventory for that ReLeaf project. Short answer is 5-10 trees a year. But, the plan should indicate seeking grant funds as often as possible.**

How much work is completed by Village staff versus a contractor? What's the dividing line for which Village staff is comfortable doing work, compared to a contractor? **Our staff will remove small to medium trees, clean up after a storm, and perform basic pruning. They use the following criteria in determining the need to bring in a contractor: Tree height, circumference, if we own the right equipment (the Village does not have a bucket truck, for example), hazards (power lines, for example). Timing can also be an issue. If something happens because of a storm and it's the middle of summer or plow season, our DPW may simply need to bring someone in because they do not have time to take care of the issue.**

Does the Village require any permits for a resident to maintain, remove, prune, treat, or otherwise injure or damage a Village tree? Can you direct me a copy to any permit applications,

if one exists? **No. we guess that might be something the Davey Group may recommend.** (Update: Ordinance 127 – Landscaping Ordinance may be of interest).

2. Observations by DPW on pruning needs (general not specific). Bacon updated Smith and Dye on a information conversation with DPW related to pruning. In a previous meeting, Dye agreed to provide documentation on possible pruning locations. Bacon said DPW had reported (informally) that as plowing has been completed, they have been noting areas when pruning would be useful.

3. Tree removal. Bacon provided confirmation that the two obvious trees needing removal have been removed. One was a split Maple on M-22 by the curve out of town heading toward honor. The second was at Shalda Park. Both have been updated in the inventory.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15

Submitted by:
Maggie Bacon